

VZCZCXRO1931
PP RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHEG #0946 0921503
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 021503Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4418
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS CAIRO 000946

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [EG](#) [ARABL](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA: ARAB LEAGUE MEETING CALLS FOR MORE
INCLUSIVE POLITICAL PROCESS AND TRANSITION FROM AFRICAN
UNION TO UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPERS

Sensitive but unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Arab heads of state met in Riyadh on March 28-29 at an annual Arab League summit, where they addressed the Arab-Israeli conflict, Darfur, and Somalia, among other topics. On Somalia, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al Faisal convened on March 28 an informal meeting that included the UN Secretary General, the Arab League Secretary General, AU Peace and Security Commission Chair, the EU High Commissioner for the Middle East, and the Organization of Islamic Conferences Secretary General. They issued a statement on Somalia (text below) which focused on deployment of UN peace-keepers in lieu of the current African Union operation (AMISOM), as well as on the political reconciliation process.

¶2. (SBU) During an April 2 debrief on the Riyadh Summit to Cairo-based diplomats, Arab League Chief of Staff Hisham Youssef said that the March 28 Somalia statement sent a clear Arab and international message to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) that the Somali political process must be more inclusive to succeed. The Arab League, he said, believes political talks set to begin on April 16 in Mogadishu will fail if not made more inclusive. He also said Saudi Arabia is considering hosting a gathering of Somali political parties in Jeddah in the near future to resume the political process established by the Arab League prior to Ethiopia's invasion.

¶3. (U) Text of Statement on Somalia, issued at Arab League Summit:

Begin text (in English):

Title: "Informal Meeting on Somalia on the Margins of the Arab Summit, Riyadh, March 27, 2007"

His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al-Faysal convened an informal meeting that included UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC) Secretary-General Ekmelledin Ihsanoglu, African Union Chairperson Alpha Omar Konare, Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa, EU High Representative for Middle East Affairs Javier Solana, and Kenyan FM Raphael Tuju to discuss a coordinated way forward on Somalia. Following a thorough discussion of the issues involved, the group came to the following consensus:

The situation in Somalia is becoming increasingly urgent. While resolution is first and foremost the responsibility of the Somalis themselves, the international community must pay close attention at taking early action to assist;

The rapid expansion of AMISOM is essential to provide security for the process and allow an early withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops. It is critical to ensure there is no gap

between the departure of Ethiopian forces and the deployment of AMISOM forces;

National reconciliation is key to resolving the crisis and it must be inclusive to succeed. A National Reconciliation Conference must be well-prepared and include all relevant groups;

Adequate security, conference preparations, and inclusive representation are required to achieve progress in the process of reconciliation. The effort that will start on 16 April and should be the beginning of a process to achieve these objectives.

The April 3 Cairo meeting of the Contact Group, plus OIC, can start discussion on these issues. It should develop a strategy for promoting an inclusive reconciliation process, with a clear timetable to move the process forward quickly.

The progress in Somalia should allow for early action by the United Nations Security Council to establish a peacekeeping force to replace AMISOM. Such a mandate would have to be carefully written to avoid past mis-steps in Somalia. Work needs to start on training a national security force to bear part of the security load.

A solution to the Somalia crisis will take a sustained effort by the Somalis and the international community. Members of the group will provide and urge the international community to provide sufficient funds if agreement can be reached.

RICCIARDONE